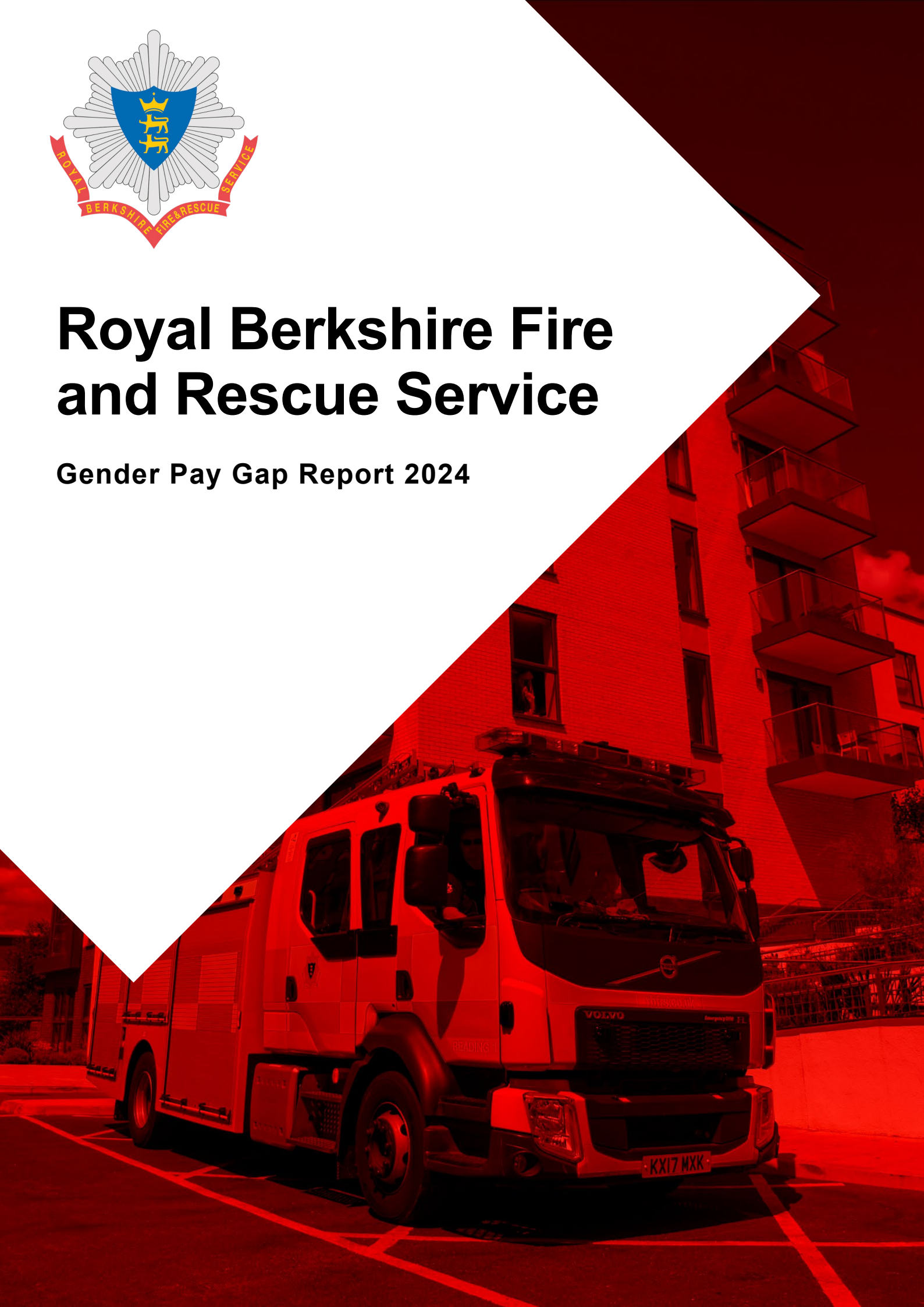




Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service

Gender Pay Gap Report 2024





Executive Summary

The gender pay gap report for Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) provides information on the pay gap that exists between males and females within the Service. The pay gap is calculated according to specific calculation requirements using the mean and median average rates of hourly pay for males and females and this is also split into four quartile pay bands. A negative pay gap shows that females are paid more than males.

Due to national reporting requirements and provisions, RBFRS can only report the Gender Pay Gap for staff who identify as either male or female. RBFRS have, and continue to use, internal reporting mechanisms which take into account all gender identities and expressions that are not limited to the binary of male and female.

Our mean pay gap is -3.17% and our median pay gap is -8.19%. This shows on average for each £1 earned by males, females earn £1.03 according to the mean gender pay gap and £1.08 for the median. The median gap is a more accurate measure of a gender pay gap as it discounts very high or very low rates of pay that can skew the overall average. The national median gender pay gap for 2023 was 14.3%.

The mean and median pay gap is also calculated for each of the quartile pay bands (lower, lower middle, upper middle and upper). Due to the various elements making up pay within the Fire Service, including allowances and payments for additional responsibilities, these quartiles can be very fluid and pay gaps across the quartiles can appear different from the overall pay gap. Each quartile is also impacted year on year by movement within the quartiles in terms of recruitment of new staff, pay increases and promotions.

While RBFRS is confident that it is paying the same salary to roles of equivalent value to all staff, care should be taken when considering the latest gender pay figures. It is important that, while the gender pay gap figures at RBFRS indicate a strong position and demonstrate we do not operate a pay system that disadvantages female staff, it is recognised that females are still significantly underrepresented in the operational workforce. The mean and median gap should therefore be considered in the context of these workforce demographics. The Service continues to work hard to attract a more diverse workforce through a positive action plan and recruitment opportunities.



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Background

Gender pay gap reporting requires employers with more than 250 employees to publish statutory calculations every year showing how large the pay gap is between their male and female employees. The method for calculating this information is published on the UK government website gov.uk.

RBFRS are required to report on the following:

Mean gender pay gap	The difference between the mean hourly rate of pay of male employees and that of female employees as a percentage.
Median gender pay gap	The difference between the median hourly rate of pay of male employees and that of female employees as a percentage.
Mean bonus gap	The difference between the mean bonus pay paid to male employees and that paid to female employees as a percentage.
Median bonus gap	The difference between the median bonus pay paid to male employees and that paid to female employees as a percentage.
Bonus proportions	The proportions of male and female relevant employees who were paid a bonus during the relevant period
Quartile pay bands	The proportions of male and female employees in the lower, lower middle, upper middle and upper quartile pay bands.

According to the Office for National Statistics Data the UK average median pay gap for all employees for 2023 is 14.3% (please note, the national average mean pay gap figures are not published).

RBFRS reported the second lowest average mean and median gender pay gap for our Fire Service family group in 2022-2023.

RBFRS' Pay and Bonus Gender Pay Gap

This Gender Pay Gap Report is based on data as at 31 March 2024. RBFRS employed 639 staff with 474 (74%) identifying as male and 164 (26%) identifying as female.

Due to national reporting requirements and provisions, RBFRS can only report the Gender Pay Gap for staff who identify as either male or female. RBFRS have, and continue to use, internal reporting mechanisms which take into account all gender identities and expressions that are not limited to the binary of male and female.



	Mean		Median	
Year	2023	2024	2023	2024
Pay Gap	-5.70%	-3.17%	-2.32%	-8.19%
Bonus*	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

* RBFRS does not offer a bonus scheme therefore this measure has not been calculated. Additional Responsibility Allowances (ARAs) and Continuous Professional Development (CPD) payments are included in ordinary pay. For clarity, ordinary pay is defined as basic pay, shift premium pay, pay for piecework, pay for leave and allowances.

A **negative** pay gap shows that females earn 3.17% more than males based on a **mean** hourly rate of pay and 8.19% more than males on **median** hourly rates of pay. These figures do demonstrate a strong position in terms of pay, but it is important to consider them the context of the demographics of the workforce where female operational staff are underrepresented.

What do the mean and median gender pay gap figures tell us?

The mean gives an overall indication of the size of the gender pay gap in RBFRS. A high mean gender pay gap indicates that a payment system is operated that disadvantages women. At RBFRS, the median gender pay gap is considerably less than the most recently published national figures. This indicates that when comparing the median hourly rates when calculated using the nationally agreed method for the workforce as a whole, males earn on average slightly less than females.

The median is typically a more representative figure as the mean can be skewed by a handful of highly paid employees this can be seen more clearly when you compare quartile on quartile.

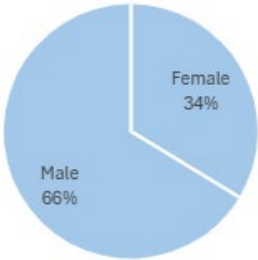
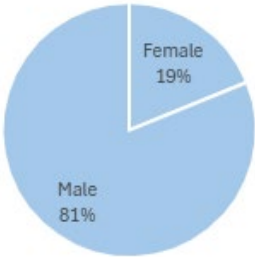
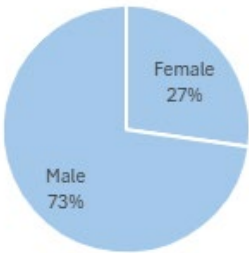
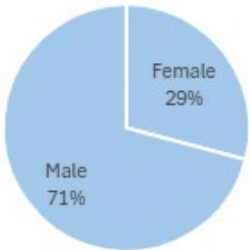
The quartile distribution detailed below (which is based on the actual hourly ordinary pay for all staff) gives an indication of how males and females are distributed across the organisation, in addition to the mean and median pay gap in each of the quartiles.

Quartile Pay Bands

The proportion of males/females in each quartile pay band is as follows:

Quartile	Year	Mean Pay Gap	Median Pay Gap
Lower	2024	-15.30%	-4.17%



		2023	-19.80%	-5.49%
				
Lower Middle		2024	2.78%	3.24%
				
		2023	1.54%	1.59%
Upper Middle		2024	-1.12%	-1.03%
				
		2023	-0.19%	-0.79%
Upper		2024	2.03%	-0.02%
				
		2023	-2.78%	-0.46%

Commentary

The mean and median pay gap was calculated for each of the quartiles to give an indication of the range and distribution of male and female pay. The figures above differ from the overall gender pay gap for RBFRRS due to the scope for variation in hourly pay. This is as a result of the large



range of roles and grades in the upper middle and upper quartiles compared to the smaller ranges in the lower quartiles.

The proportion of female employees in the workforce as a whole has increased by 3% since the last report. It is therefore important that this is taken into account when considering the gender pay gap figures.

In the Lower quartile, both the mean and median pay gap is smaller comparison with last year. Whilst it is still a negative pay gap in favour of females, the size of the gap has reduced. There has been an increase in the proportion of females in the lower quartile this year by 4% in comparison with last year, with NJC for Local Government Services (Green Book) grade three posts at the top end of the quartile, the majority of which are female. This quartile also contains 24 Firefighters on the Trainee pay grade, 20 of which are male. The bottom end of the quartile is predominately made up of On Call Firefighters of which the majority are male.

Both the mean and median pay gap for the Lower Middle quartile is larger in comparison with last year. This quartile has the highest portion of males overall. It is also predominately made up of Competent Firefighters, who are also mostly male. Additional payments for specific skills are included in the hourly rate when calculating the Gender Pay Gap. This makes a difference to the overall mean and median in this quartile and in RBFRS as a whole, as such allowances are available to staff conditioned to Grey Book terms and conditions, the majority of which are male. The bottom end of the quartile is predominately made up Green Book grade three or four employees and Firefighters Control, the majority of which are female.

In the Upper Middle quartile, the proportion of females has increased by 8% in comparison to last year, with the majority of females falling into the middle and top of the quartile in terms of hourly rate. The bottom of the quartile is predominately made up of Firefighter Competent, the majority of which are male.

In the Upper quartile both the mean and median gender pay gap is larger in comparison to last year. The mean pay gap is now positive in favour of males. The proportion of males has increased by 1% in comparison to last year. Despite this, the quartile contains a high proportion of higher earning employees conditioned to Green Book terms and conditions, the majority of which are female. The Upper quartile includes eight Heads of Service (seven male and one female). The Upper quartile also contained four Directors (two male and two female). The mean pay gap can be skewed by a handful of highly paid employees.

It is recognised that women are still significantly underrepresented in the operational workforce accounting for 7.78% of this group as at 31 March 2024, despite a small increase in comparison to 6.85% as at 31 March 2023. The service continues to work hard to attract a more diverse workforce through the EDI Action Plan and positive action activities. RBFRS is confident that it is paying the same salary to roles of equivalent value to all staff. An equal pay audit was carried out in September 2022, which did not highlight any underlying causes for concern. A further equal pay audit will be carried out in the last quarters of 2024/2025.

The Service continues to work hard to attract a more diverse workforce, and is already undertaking actions to address the overall diversity within the workforce. Specifically in terms of



increasing the representation of females in operational roles, this has included (but is not limited to):

- Utilising Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) to identify the impacts of recruitment processes to ensure there are no negative or disproportionate impacts on any gender. RBFRS have reviewed their guidance and training around completing EIAs.
- Continuing to improve the programme of positive action events including 'Discover a Career as a Firefighter' and increasing the frequency and understanding of these events. Evaluating these events to see how they translate to recruitment and where attendees reach within the recruitment process if not recruited. Reviewing where positive action events can be used within promotion processes.
- Expanding our equality monitoring processes and reviewing the data we gather to allow RBFRS to monitor the career progression of underrepresented groups within the service.
- Focusing on retention of female identifying staff by taking action to ensure our workplace is inclusive, including improving facilities, providing quality, practical and professional workwear, improving our female wellbeing package including menopause awareness and recognising events such as International Women's Day

RBFRS has launched face to face EDI and Cultural Awareness Training in 2024 to help improve learning across the Service, demonstrating our commitment to promoting EDI and making a positive difference for our employees.

Specific actions to address the gender pay gap are contained in the Equality Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan which is appended to this report. A version of the plan will be published on the RBFRS website.

Wayne Bowcock
Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive
November 2024

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FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE



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